

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 September 1968.



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
24 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Mexico

Students and security forces clashed again last night, and 52 people reportedly were wounded by gunfire.

Both sides appear primed for a showdown. Security officials expect Diaz Ordaz to order the army onto other campuses in Mexico City shortly, and the Mexican press reports that several leftists are to be tried for sedition. The students reportedly are planning another massive demonstration before the end of the month, and the Trotskyites and other far-out types among them are organizing classes in street warfare.

2. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

A Czechoslovak official has told our embassy the following:

--Dubcek is currently so popular that he cannot be removed, but he may yield to unrelenting Soviet animosity and step down voluntarily. This could occur after the next party congress, which the Czechs reportedly have tentatively scheduled for December.

--Dubcek and Svoboda are almost constantly at odds.

--Most Soviet troops will be out of Czechoslovakia by 28 October.

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This morning's press is carrying conflicting reports about whether the Czech leadership is going ahead today with its oft-scheduled trip to Moscow. The trip apparently will not take place until the two sides have reached substantive agreement in Prague, and further delay would suggest that there still are issues to be resolved.

3. Rumania

The Rumanians may be learning to live with the Soviet forces mobilized near their border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sharp anti-Soviet polemics issued from Bucharest immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, but having gotten on record, the Rumanians have since refrained from criticism of the Warsaw Five. Some Rumanian officials have remarked that as each day passed they were becoming less apprehensive.

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At the same time, Rumanian leaders periodically put out explicit reminders that the threat from Moscow still exists. This obviously is true, but Bucharest would not be above emphasizing the threat as a way of using the crisis in the Communist world to advance its own interests. The Rumanians may in fact believe that focusing world attention on the danger of Soviet intervention is a good way of keeping the Soviets from moving in.

4. Yugoslavia - Soviet Union

Pravda has attacked Tito personally for his government's increasingly liberal domestic policies. The Yugoslav press has responded with eulogies for Tito and new declarations of the country's determination to follow its own path, but Belgrade is nervous.

The Yugoslavs fear Moscow may try to exploit both their traditional internal rivalries and the controversies which have arisen over the government's economic and social reforms. They are also worried about possible Soviet economic reprisals.

Yugoslav fears notwithstanding, our estimate is that overt hostility from Moscow will unite the Yugoslavs as nothing else could.

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5. West Germany

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6. Peru

Controversy continues over the six-week-old agreement between the Belaunde government and the US-owned International Petroleum Company. The radical wing of Belaunde's own party is threatening to withdraw its support of the government unless the agreement is nullified, but the government has found an ally in the main opposition party, which strongly supports the agreement. Rumor has it that the military is thinking of taking a hand in the debate.

Some changes in the political line-up seem likely as a result of all this. We would expect to see more military faces in any reshuffled cabinet.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Conditions in Hanoi: Hanoi remains on a war footing despite the absence of US bombing [redacted]

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[redacted] The city's civil defense program, including construction of streetside individual bomb shelters, continues.

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[redacted] many industries remain dispersed outside Hanoi.

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Some evacuees, however, have returned to Hanoi. [redacted] truck traffic in Hanoi, as well as along the Hanoi-Haiphong road, is common during the day, whereas prior to the bombing restrictions, trucks moved only during hours of twilight and darkness.

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Bomb Damage in Hai Duong: [redacted] as late as last May, bomb damage in Hai Duong city was still hampering road and rail traffic between Hanoi and Haiphong. [redacted] the destruction of Hai Duong almost total. Goods passing through Hai Duong by rail had to be off-loaded, taken across pontoon bridges by truck, and then reloaded on trains before continuing on to Hanoi or Haiphong.

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New Identification Card for Infiltrators: A new infiltration document more sophisticated than those seen during the past several years was found on 11 September near Con Thien, just below the eastern Demilitarized Zone area. It included a physical description of the bearer and his fingerprints in addition to information routinely seen in earlier documents.

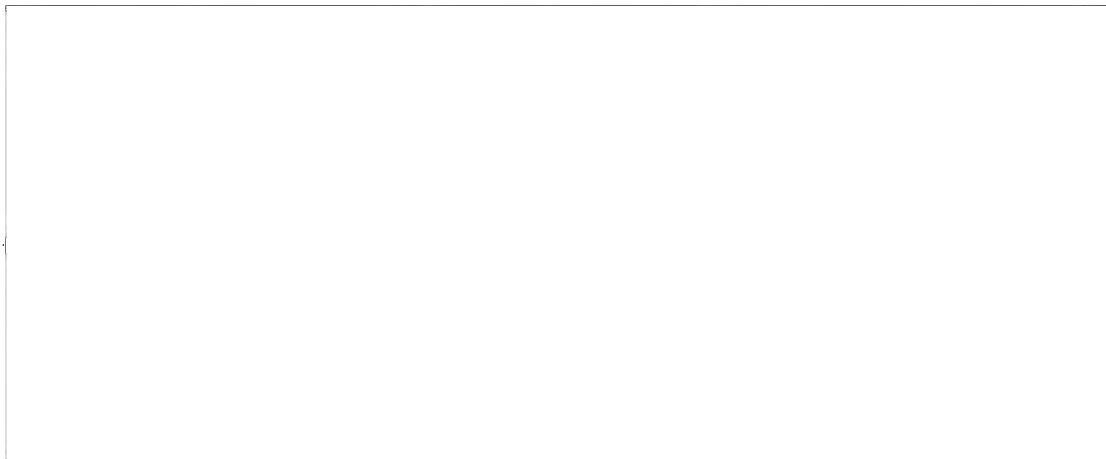
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The owner of the card apparently was a member of an infiltration group which entered the pipeline in North Vietnam during the May-June period of this year. A date on the pass suggests it may have been issued during May.

This new identification card may be part of a Communist effort to tighten security and control over infiltrating personnel. There have recently been indications of North Vietnamese concern over desertions from southbound infiltration groups.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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